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ABSTRACT

Within a 3-year period, a rural Midwestern school district's Hispanic student population increased from 3 to over 180 due to the hiring of migrant workers by a local meat packing plant. A qualitative study using interviews and classroom observations examined the processes through which 23 teachers and 5 administrators in this school district formulated an effective instructional program for recently arrived Spanish-speaking students. Input was sought from teachers, the Hispanic parents, and the Hispanic students. The change process consisted of three phases. The Program-Exploring Phase established a common base of understanding among the three stakeholder groups about effective bilingual programs. In the Consensus-Building Phase, a steering committee of representative stakeholders drew on the discussions of the first phase to develop a Statement of Principles and Beliefs (SPB). During the "Response and Ratification Phase," the SPB was sent back to stakeholders for their responses and was eventually presented to the school board for ratification. Shifts in the perspectives of teachers and administrators were reported. Their belief systems were affected by the reform effort according to their willingness to change. By using a process that included all stakeholder perspectives and involved teachers and administrators sharing responsibility as colleagues, an effective instructional program was created that facilitated the academic achievement and social integration of the new students. (Contains 16 references.) (TD)

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Migrant Children in the Rural Midwest: A Collaboration of Teachers and Administrators to Reform School Programs

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the American Educational Research Association

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Introduction

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to document the processes the teachers (n=23) and the administrators (n=5) engaged in, and the resources they accessed, to formulate an effective Instructional Program for the recently arrived Spanish speaking students in their district. The collaboration between the teachers and the administrators was a critical aspect of their ability to respond proactively to their reform efforts. A fundamental part of the process was the development of reorganized belief systems among several of the teachers and school administrators.

Within a three year period, the Beardstown School District's Hispanic student population increased from 3 students to over 180 students, or about 15% of the schools' students. The projections were that the Hispanic students would continue to enter the school district at a similar rate; a result of the hiring of migrant workers by a local meat packing plant. Currently, their enrollment stands at 18% Hispanic, most of whom have limited English proficiency, or are monolingual Spanish speaking. The majority of these immigrant students were from states in central Mexico, and the remainder were migrant workers' children from Texas. These demographic changes created a need for a new Instructional Program to define the instructional paradigms of their growing diversity. The curricular and the educational goals of the District were adversely affecting the linguistic and literacy success of the immigrant and migrant students. Situated in the small, agrarian community as they were, the school personnel had few resources at hand for beginning such a task. The school district was desperately short of qualified bilingual teachers, and of practical and theoretical knowledge about educating these new students. Their support, ideas, and success came mainly from their own initiatives of information seeking, from their efforts of collaboration and shared decision making.

In this paper, I present the processes and the interactions of the school personnel in their attempts to formulate a new Instructional Program that would address the needs of the students and the teachers to accomplish their learning objectives. A fundamental part of their work necessarily included changes in the belief systems of the affected personnel. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What collaborative processes did the teachers and the principals use to accomplish their goals?
2. How did they determine the characteristics of their new Instructional Program, and what were they?
3. To what extent were the other district administrators involved?
4. How did the administrators' and teachers' belief systems change as a result of engagement in the collaborative, program building process?

Theoretical Framework

Every year migrant workers disperse to almost every state in the union (Crump, 1998). According to the U. S. Department of Education about 700,000 of these are migrant workers' children of school age. By the year 2000, minority students will make up 40% of our nation's school population (Aponte & Siles, 1997). How schools respond to these changes is critical to the development of their students

and their faculty members, and the people of the communities they serve (Miramontes, Nadeau & Commins, 1997).

Reform efforts in schools can provide broad frameworks for the processes of decision making, but they typically lack the necessary kinds of decisions, programs and curricula that contribute to the development of programs and policies for linguistic minorities (Crawford, 1998; Gandara, 1994; Valdez, 1989). Most often the decisions regarding instructional programs for second language learners is left to the "expertise" of special program people and/or an administrator, while the unaffected teachers see the needs of the minority students as peripheral to the total school agenda. Missing from the program discussions are two critical parts: a) the informed perspectives of the affected parties - mainly the teachers; and 2) the established research base that delineates best practices for English as a second language learners (Zehler, Hopstock, Fleischman, & Greniuk, 1994). No matter how promising the innovations, the instructional programs will fail if the grounded research, the accumulated knowledge of best practices, and the sharing of responsibilities by the school personnel is ignored (Freeman, 1998).

A total school involvement is key to designing effective instructional programs, and is facilitated through a process of inquiry, shared decision making, and innovative ideas developed and applied to the unique setting of the individual school or district (Miramontes, Nadeau & Commins, 1997). It is widely understood that all students benefit from schools where all of the stakeholders contribute to the process, and where the work is facilitated through networks and task groups who share the responsibilities equally for the outcomes (Graham, 1996; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992; Trujillo, 1997). Schools that make a difference, then, consider three, interactive variables: the children's home environments, the leadership and the teachers of the schools they attend, and the kinds of instructional paradigms they receive (Genesee, 1994; Nieto, 1992). In school reform, and especially in reform that encompasses second language learning, the challenge for many schools is how to connect with groups who are typically marginalized a) by the structural organization of the school, b) because of language differences, c) who do not understand, or have no knowledge about, the functioning of schools in this country, and d) who do not know what is expected of them (Burnaby, 1996; Edwards, 1995; Delgato-Gaitan, 1992).

Methodology: Case Study / Ethnography

Participants

Participants included twenty three teachers (30% of the K-12 staff) and five administrators (four principals, one superintendent: 100% of the administrators). Except for one of the principals, the educators who participated were originally from the Beardstown community. They were born and raised there, they received their teaching degrees from a nearby university, and returned to Beardstown to teach in the school system. There are approximately 1,200 students in the K-12 system. The

Kindergarten school is in a separate building from the 1-12 grade students. The Superintendent's office is across the street from the 1-12 complex. The Kindergarten building is located several blocks away.

Data & Collection

Semi-structured Interviews. Taped interviews were made for each of the twenty eight participants. An interview protocol of 11 open-ended questions was used for each of the teachers, and a similar protocol of 8 questions was used for each of the administrators. The interviews were transcribed, and then coded using the software Ethnograph. Classroom observations were conducted to note the teachers' pedagogies and instructional paradigms. Follow-up interviews, observations, and conversations were necessary to clarify certain responses or issues.

Approach to Analysis

An inductive analysis was conducted to discover the themes and the patterns of interaction, as well as the beliefs of the participants regarding the effects of the information gathering, and the collaborative, consensus building processes. Based on the interview protocols, and the initial reading of the transcripts, I identified the following primary categories that reflected the themes and the topics discussed by most or all of the participants: *Academic Programs, Cultural Relations, Languages in the Social Context, Implementation, After School Activities, Programs for Parents, Faculty Development, Content of Instructional Materials, Pedagogy, and Assessment and Placement.* As I reread the transcripts, observed in classrooms, and engaged teachers informally, certain constructs emerged as common factors to the primary categories. Subcategories were assigned to the primary categories to define the cross-linked themes of the participants that were embedded in the transcripts, and in the interview protocols: *belief systems, consensus building, and levels of involvement.* These constructs contributed to the content of this portion of the analysis of the project. Much work is yet to be completed for a thick description to emerge from the data.

The Data

The processes of collaboration

The principals from the elementary school and from the Junior/Senior high school met with the principle investigator over the summer to discuss ways and means to stabilize the instructional program, and to determine a long range direction for the bilingual program within their school district. A plan evolved that would seek input from three venues: 1) the teachers, 2) the Hispanic parents, and 3) the Hispanic students. It was established that these three groups had valuable insights about the functioning of an effective bilingual program, and about the structure and organization of an instructional program that could meet their objectives. Through a series of three meetings held separately by each concerned group, a set of statements about their principles and beliefs of education was drafted. Three representatives from each group met to form a Steering Committee, charged with combining all of the

statements into one single document in English and Spanish, using the process of consensus building. The Statement of Principles and Beliefs (SPB), as the document was called, was then sent back to the general faculty, to the parents in the Hispanic community, and to the Hispanic students for their responses. A committee of the School Board that dealt with policies and planning was also given a copy of the SPB for their response. Eight months after that initial meeting of the principal investigator and the two principals, the SPB was presented to the School Board for the final ratification.

The process was divided into three phases: Program Exploring, Consensus Building, Response and Ratification. The objectives of Program Exploring were to establish a common base of understanding among the participants in all three venues about the various bilingual program models in operation in the US that were effective, especially in schools with similar demographics, and to begin dialogues about elements of an effective bilingual program for their schools. This was preparatory to soliciting statements of principles and beliefs from the group. Consensus Building involved the nine members of the Steering Committee whose task was to draft a conclusive document that constituted the combined principles and beliefs submitted from the Program Exploring phase. The function of Response and Ratification was to ensure that the faculty, the Hispanic parents, and the Hispanic students had a SPB document that they could support, and that they felt would serve each and all concerned. It was widely accepted that not all persons would agree with all of the aspects of the Statement of Principles and Beliefs. Moreover, as the development of the SPB continued, it became clear that this process was the most salient method to affect change.

Characteristics of the SPB and Instructional Program

In the Consensus Building phase, ten separate yet interrelated categories evolved from the work of the Program Exploring phase: Academic Programs, Cultural Relations, Languages in the Social Context, Implementation, After School Activities, Programs for Parents, Faculty Development, Content of Instructional Materials, Pedagogy, Assessment and Placement.

Academic Programs: concerned the necessary structures that would facilitate the literacy achievement of all English language learners. It contained statements about second language learning in subject areas, recognition of dominance in one language, the availability of dual language classes, the availability of appropriate materials, and the processes of forming classes.

Cultural Relations: recognized the need for Hispanic families to maintain their cultural heritage. The statements concerned how the school could facilitate that through its curricula, through its classroom processes, and within its program of cultural celebrations and recognition.

Languages in the Social Context: focused on school-community communication. Its statements called for communications to remain sensitive to all cultural beliefs, methods of interaction, and ways of participating in the social milieu.

Implementation: how the SPB and Instructional Program would be actualized in the schools. This section specified the efforts to maintain one's primary language, holistic principles of engaged learning in

classrooms, rights and responsibilities of teachers and students in the learning processes, recognition of egalitarian participation throughout the instructional program, designation of human, financial and material resources for learning, and the on-going function of the Steering Committee.

After School Activities: statements concerned with the appropriateness and availability of after school activities, both academic and non-academic, for all students.

Program for Parents: contained statements that recognized the importance of parents' participation in all phases of schooling, and that recognized the potential of the local community to become involved.

Faculty Development: delineated the responsibilities for faculty to instigate and maintain on-going programs that promoted awareness of immigrants, understanding of cultural differences, and further learning of the processes of second language acquisition.

Content of Instructional Materials: statements that regarded the school district's responsibility to provide the materials necessary for the instruction of ELL students. The breadth and the nature of these materials was suggested, and further delineated their appropriateness.

Pedagogy: contained statements regarding teachers' continual learning to teach and work with diverse students. This section was prescriptive, calling for culturally appropriate methods of instruction, allowances for primary language support in classroom activities, assistance in helping ELL students' understanding, and efforts to reduce linguistic barriers.

Assessment and Placement: statements that recognized appropriate processes and procedures to ensure that ELL students were properly evaluated, then placed in contexts that would maximize their potential.

Levels of Involvement: administrators

The initial design of the processes and procedures to formulate a Statement of Principles and Beliefs was accomplished by two of the four principals, along with the principle investigator. The Superintendent, Mr. Malloy, was apprised of the evolving plans, and was concerned only with the developments in general. He agreed to commit funds for release time for twelve teachers to participate in the Program Exploring phase, and authorized the release of the Hispanic students from classes to attend the Steering Committee meetings. He maintained a passive distance throughout the Program Exploring phase, preferring to be briefed as the process evolved. His attention was focused on the difficulties that he was having with the new Bilingual Director for the district, Mr. Brandeis. (The former Bilingual Director, who served for two years, was dismissed because of her inability to conduct a stable program of bilingual education. She was not trained as an educator, which contributed to her difficulties.) Mr. Malloy was receiving complaints from parents and from teachers about Mr. Brandeis' performance, or rather non performance, of his duties, and of his inability to make decisions regarding student placements, teaching assignments, and allocate resources appropriately and efficiently. Once the SPB document was finalized by the Steering Committee, Mr. Malloy met with the Policy and Planning committee of the School Board to review the document with them, and to receive their initial responses.

He took a more active role in the Response and Ratification phase, acting as the representative of the School Board and its committee. Analysis of his interviews and his interactions showed that he believed that the process would be therapeutic for those who were actively involved, and most concerned with the education of the Hispanic students. From the beginning, his intentions were that the SPB document was not to be a policy; that it carried advisory significance only. He believed that the instruction of the bilingual students be left to the direction of the Bilingual Director, and that he retain the ultimate control over the bilingual programs. Other interviews revealed that the District was out of compliance with their Migrant Education grants, and with their Title VII grants, and with the State regulations for bilingual and LEP students' education.

The principal of George Elementary, Mr. Worthington, slowly withdrew his participation once the initial plan was established, and before the school year began. He had no knowledge of instructional practices for ELL students, or of second language acquisition processes, and chose to defer to those individuals with the expertise. He was willing to listen to views about pedagogy and language issues, but was not able to give an informed opinion. Because he was the long-time principal of Broadway School, he did not have a history of administering the staff at George Elementary. Added to this, his staff was severely divided between those who believed in maintaining one's primary language, and those who believed in English Only. Each of the two groups of teachers had several strong, vocal leaders who maintained their positions, causing difficulties for the bilingual staff who needed to interface with them and their students. Mr. Worthington chose not to become involved in those internal disputes, but instead, focused his attention on discipline matters, and on the general duties of maintaining a building. Analysis of his interviews and interactions brought to the fore that he did not overtly obstruct the developmental process of the SPB; he supported its efforts. However, because he did not understand what was occurring throughout the three phases, he was not effective in his interactions with his teachers who requested information about what was being done to redesign the bilingual program. Moreover, he contributed to the rumors that flourished through his not knowing. Instead of deferring his staff's questions to informed sources, or attempting to find the answers, he simply answered their inquires from his own inadequate knowledge. Furthermore, interviews with the teachers showed that in his recruitment of teachers to serve on the teacher team for the Program Exploring phase, he could not tell them the function or the purpose of the meetings, nor was he able to explain the overall process to them when asked.

The main, driving force behind the process of developing a Statement of Principles and Beliefs was the Junior/Senior high principal, Mr. Karnesky. He was hired one year prior to the commencement of this process, to fill a vacancy when the then-principal, Mr. Malloy, moved up to become the superintendent. This principal was the only administrator that was not from the local area. Analysis of the transcripts revealed that he was very concerned with the lagging success of the Hispanic students, with the resistance of many teachers to appropriately engage the ELL students, with the establishment of a long range plan for ELL instruction, with the need for qualified bilingual teachers, and with

bilingual materials necessary for affective instruction. He took a strong leadership role in organizing faculty development programs for his staff to help them understand the issues of second language acquisition, working with diverse students, and in developing cultural awareness and sensitivity. He requested, and was awarded, after school, Spanish language classes for his staff, believing that they should attempt to communicate with their limited English proficient (LEP) students. The staff attended on a voluntary basis, and the school district paid their tuition. Mr. Karnesky was a regular 'student' in the Spanish classes, and actively used his new language skills in the hallways, in communication with the Hispanic students, and in his interactions with the bilingual staff. He actively participated in all three phases of the development of the SPB document, and lobbied aggressively for its approval and ratification. His active leadership, which emulated that of a strong superintendent, gave direction to George Elementary as well as his own Junior/Senior high. He reorganized his staff assignments to afford those teachers, whose skills and abilities would benefit the Hispanic students without diminishing the Anglo students' education, the opportunities to explore different methods of instruction in mixed language classes. Mr. Karnesky attended several national conferences for teachers and administrators that centered on language and diversity issues, and effective instructional practices. From one conference in particular, he developed an approach to solve the dilemma of the District's inability to attract qualified ESL or bilingual staff due to their low salaries resulting from their low tax base.

Mrs. Martin, the principal of Broadway, an outlying elementary school in the district, maintained a distant involvement. She had been the principal of George Elementary for many years, but requested a transfer to Broadway soon after the Hispanic students began to arrive. Analysis of her interviews revealed an unwillingness to undertake the restructuring of her school, and the reassignment of her faculty in order to accommodate the new students' needs. A portion of her decision to transfer was based on her age: she was ten years past retirement, and felt that she did not have the desire nor the necessary skills to accomplish the momentous changes necessary in her school, although she did not understand what those changes should be.

The fourth principal in the district, Mrs. Osmund, administered two schools: a preK facility and a kindergarten building. The preK facility, Granite School, was established in response to the rapid increase in the preschool aged Hispanic children, and was operated primarily as a bilingual school. Her original building housed three kindergarten classes; one of them a Spanish Only room staffed by a bilingual teacher. Mrs. Osmund was very active in procuring grants to fund her two buildings, tapping the resources of Migrant Education programs and the Title VII programs. She took a leadership role in designing parent involvement programs that would require all parents, Hispanic parents included, to attend parenting classes, and to make regular sustained visits to the classrooms. Analysis of her interviews told of a strong leader, committed to the success of her students, and to the continued advancement of her staff's knowledge bases in cross-cultural and second language acquisition issues. Because of her concerns and commitments to her two buildings, she often found herself at odds with Mr. Malloy. Mrs. Osmund aggressively pursued programs and issues that she believed were

advantageous not only for her responsibilities, but for the District as well. Her two facilities were sited on the opposite side of the town from the elementary-high school complex and District Office. This contributed to the sense of her individuality regarding her participation and inclusion in the operations of the District as a whole. This point was brought out in other interviews and classroom conversations. The demographics showed that the bulk of the young Hispanic students were in her two buildings, resulting in her feeling that she was responsible for the leadership in the lower grades. She also understood that Mr. Worthington was doing little to resolve the difficulties in his building, and viewed that as unfortunate for those students' academic and social successes.

Levels of Involvement: teachers

The most involved teachers were the bilingual staff; however, there were a few teachers in George Elementary and in the Junior/Senior high school who were active in the developmental process for an effective instructional program. Among those in the elementary school were Mrs. Riechter, Mrs. Maller, Mrs. Rothman, Mrs. Loch, Mrs. Collier, and Mr. Courtland. Each had her/his own beliefs about the necessity of bilingual education, the processes of learning English, and about the classroom methods of instructing students with mixed language abilities. Most of these teachers taught a minimum of four ELL students each year, out of their usual twenty students in a classroom. One teacher, Mr. Courtland was bilingual, but was teaching under a provisional certificate. He had a higher percentage of ELL students than any of the other teachers. Two teachers, Mrs. Maller and Mrs. Rothman, were strong advocates of English Only, and represented that faction within George Elementary.

In the Program Exploring phase, Mrs. Maller, Mrs. Rothman, and Mrs. Collier served on the teacher team, in addition to one of the bilingual staff, from George Elementary. They attended the three sessions, and participated in the discussions to varying degrees. Mrs. Maller was especially vocal and critical of the process, and of the bilingual education models presented in the discussions. Her strong English Only views at times dominated the discussions, leaving little opportunity for others' perspectives. She resisted any attempts of others to engage her in an open discussion of her views, choosing, instead, to hold steadfast to her beliefs. Analysis of her follow-up interviews revealed her beliefs that the Hispanic students represented a threat to her sense of nationalism, to her security in her pedagogical beliefs, and to her way of life in that small, rural town. She often expressed the thought that her ancestors came there from Europe not speaking English, and that they were able to assimilate and prosper. She believed that offering Spanish language to the Hispanic students was paramount to the downfall of America.

By contrast, Mrs. Rothman was attentive, but offered no opinions nor spoke during the lively discussions. She took notes, and listened as others debated the issues, asked the questions, and offered their statements of principles and beliefs about bilingual education and instructional practices. Analysis of her interviews showed that she came to the process with many questions about effective practices for instructing ELL students, including issues about the efficacy of Spanish as one of the languages of

instruction in her classroom. She had heard many differing views from her colleagues, and held a tentative belief that allowing Spanish in her classroom would delay or retard her students' progress. Because she was not bilingual, she had doubts about her capacity to teach in a mixed language class. The Program Exploring sessions gave her insights to the processes and the difficulties the Hispanic students faced. Moreover, she came to understand that the ELL students should have Spanish-based instruction in certain instances, and that some students only needed Spanish to support their interactions in order to formulate responses in English.

Representing a middle-ground position between these two elementary teachers was Mrs. Collier. She was an active participant in the Program Exploring phase, asking pointed questions and offering her thoughts about what the changes in the bilingual program meant for her students and for her. At times her remarks were cynical, framed in beliefs that this new process was another attempt to force a program upon already overworked teachers. Her interviews later showed her to be very concerned that her Hispanic students were not making much academic progress. She revealed that whenever the Bilingual Director or a state official visited her classroom, she told them what she believed they wanted to hear about how she conducted her class. Left on her own, she taught her class in a manner that she deemed effective for her mixed language students. She concluded that the Program Exploring sessions served to confirm some of her strategies, and to redirect her practices to a more appropriate model of instruction.

In the Junior/Senior high school, the most active teachers were Mrs. Matise, Mrs. Richmond, Mr. Starsky, and Mr. Woods. These teachers advocated for the ELL students, and for a program that would be effective for mixed language classes. Moreover, Mrs. Matise and Mr. Starsky requested that ELL students be placed in their classes. They believed that the diversity afforded opportunities for them and their Anglo students to interact with culturally and linguistically different students. The less active teachers in the Junior/Senior high school were not vocal about their beliefs; however, in the interviews it became apparent that they supported the learning of English as the primary goal of the ELL students, although stopped short of an English Only stance. Analysis of the interviews from this category of teachers showed that they had the least amount of information about the difficulties or the processes of learning a second language. Moreover, they showed a belief in an egalitarian education for their students, yet remained skeptical of the efficacy of Spanish to support their students' achievements.

Because the majority of the ESL classrooms and staff were housed in the Junior/Senior high wing of the building, the representatives in the SPB meetings from these grade levels were mostly the bilingual staff. The exceptions were two teachers, Mr. Starsky and Mr. Woods, who were the non-Spanish speaking teachers from their staff who participated in the teacher team in the Program Exploring phase. Both teachers were very interactive in the sessions, asking questions about any and all issues raised. Mr. Starsky brought insights, and offered his perspectives about the bilingual program models, based on his experiences as a multilingual speaker. He and his parents emigrated from Croatia when he was six years old, without any English language skills. He held strong beliefs that ELL

students needed L1 support during all phases of their schooling, but that their ultimate goal was to learn English well. At times he expressed dismay at the lingua-centric views adhered to by several of the other teachers in the sessions. He believed that the emphasis on English Only was detrimental to the achievement of Hispanic students in school, to the progressive growth of the nation, and served to marginalize these students in the social milieu. His interviews revealed that he often ignored the directives of the former Bilingual Director to teach his students in English only. He believed that his students not only struggled with English in general, but that they had difficulties with the concepts in their subjects. He preferred that his students converse in which ever language was most productive for understanding the subject, but encouraged them to respond in English when reporting their answers. His interviews further showed that he had tempered his approaches to other teachers in discussing the merits of bilingual education. He understood that the life changes he experienced as an emigrant were monumental compared to the insular lives of most of his colleagues. As such, he expressed his need for more tolerance of their ethno-centric beliefs.

Similar to Mr. Starsky, Mr. Woods was attentive, and often asked probing questions about the program models, and about second language acquisition. He framed his queries of the session leader in response to the context of his own classes. As one of the two Industrial Arts teachers, he had a high percentage of ELL students in two of his classes. For the two years prior to the Program Exploring sessions, he worked with the Hispanic students to help them understand the processes involved in industrial arts. He taught them the English terminology, and in turn, they taught him the same terms in Spanish. He believed that in order to for his students to be successful, he should make the attempt to learn something about them, which included their language. In the sessions, then, his base of knowledge was his considerable experience with ELL students. Therefore, his perspectives and his questions centered on how certain aspects of the bilingual education models would serve to further his and his students' understanding of English, and the processes of learning. Analysis of his interviews showed that his understanding of second language acquisition processes grew as a result of the Program Exploring sessions. Consequently, he made several changes in his instructional practices with his Hispanic students. These changes constituted different modes of communication, and the use of more graphic organizers to explain and exchange ideas. His interviews acknowledged his sensitivity to the Hispanic students' difficulties in general, and his anxiety over the success of the changes in the bilingual education model currently in place. He and his bilingual aid were advocates for a dual language model of instruction, and voiced those opinions among the staff at every opportunity.

Discussion

Analysis of the interviews and the classroom observations, along with conversations with the administrators and staff in developing the Statement of Principles and Beliefs, showed that there was a concerted effort by two principles to develop a plan whereby the school district could be more responsive to the education of the Hispanic students entering the community. Their strong leadership

was unpopular at times, but necessarily accomplished the objectives of the process to establish a direction for the bilingual education program, and its instructional practices. The role of Mrs. Osmund centered on the preK and lower elementary grades, while Mr. Karnesky's role focused on the Junior/Senior high grades. Because the George Elementary principal was ineffective in his administration within his building, Mrs. Osmund became the voice for the lower elementary grades. This left the intermediate grades without an advocate, a point brought out in interviews with the fifth and sixth grade teachers. Similarly, since the Superintendent did not take an active role in the overall administration of the process involving the district staff, Mr. Karnesky took the leadership of the process by organizing and scheduling the meeting, the substitutes for the participating teachers, and the general communication between the bilingual staff, the classroom teachers, and the other administrators in the district. Although there was little shift in the belief systems of the administrators, what became apparent was that without the strong leadership of the two principals, the development of a Statement of Beliefs and Principles to guide the reorganization of the bilingual program would have failed (Freeman, 1998).

The teachers approached the process of reform from varying perspectives, some from a position of openness to new ideas, and some from an adherence to their beliefs in "one country, one language." Those who were receptive to new approaches to their pedagogies were regarded as progressive by their colleagues and their administrators. Those who were resistant to the changes were referred to as very traditional teachers, but not willing to alter their instructional practices to accommodate the diversity in their classrooms. The reform efforts embedded in the process of designing a new, effective bilingual program affected the belief systems of the teachers according to their willingness to be open to change.

By establishing a process that included the perspectives of the teachers, the Hispanic parents, and the Hispanic students, the resultant SPB document was grounded in the beliefs and the perspectives of those disparate stakeholders. The redesign of the bilingual program, then, was not left to the recognized experts (Freeman, 1998). The teachers and the administrators involved shared the responsibility as colleagues, and not in the typical supervisor-client relationship commonly found in many educational institutions. This total involvement was key to designing an effective instructional program that facilitated the academic achievement and social integration of the new students, and the changing demographics (Graham, 1996), and allowed the process to center on the unique characteristics and context of this district (Miramontes, Nadeau & Commins, 1997). In reform efforts by schools, especially those that find that their demographics are shifting rapidly towards greater diversity, the challenge is how to involve as many groups as possible in the change process to reduce marginalizing either clients or providers (Burnaby, 1996; Genesee, 1994). This small, rural school district was able to achieve that objective to the advantage of the teachers, the administrators, the students, and the parents of the community.

Conclusions and Implications

When instructional program decisions and models are approached through a paradigm of informed, shared responsibilities, they have a greater chance of support by the teachers and administrators throughout the school district. Furthermore, when the resultant instructional practices are supported by grounded research, the students and the teachers experience a greater degree of achievement. For these reasons, the efforts to engage both the teachers and the administration in the program design were highly successful because of the practice of collaboration that was established as a basis for reaching decisions and for information gathering and exchanges. The teachers in the leadership group gained the most expertise about instructional programs for language minority students, but made concerted efforts not to marginalize the less involved teachers engaged in the processes of learning about effective programs. The process was unusual for such a context; however, the result was an innovative Instructional Program formulated specifically for the Beardstown school district's unique situation.

The implementation of the new program afforded the teachers opportunities to engage the Hispanic students in their classrooms in new ways. For the most part, the teachers complied with the new instructional program and were beginning to alter their existing instructional practices. However, only a few truly accepted their new contexts and altered their belief systems in order to see themselves as a part of the pluralistic context.

With the expansion of our nation's economy and political activity, the environment in which teachers work is becoming increasingly diverse. With this expansion comes a need for the understanding of the dynamics of such rapid and sometimes chaotic changes. Language issues and instructional practices for minority and majority populations will continue to occupy a central theme in our economic and political arenas. The schools in the community of Beardstown are a clear example of a community undergoing change as a result of this expansion, and of the political turmoil surrounding language rights and instructional paradigms. How schools respond to these shifting linguistic, political and instructional issues, and changing demographics is critical to the development of our schools as effective learning communities.

The documentation of the developmental process of the Statement of Principles and Beliefs and Instructional Program in the Beardstown School District was beneficial and practical in helping the school to understand their sociocultural underpinnings in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity. In the coming years, as the Hispanic population continues to grow and settle in new and usual regions, other schools will find themselves responding to these significant demographic changes. This research, though situated in a small, rural community, provides helpful insights for other schools and communities in similar situations.

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